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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Security Council President agrees Secretary-General should send technical mission to assess security for humanitarian agencies in Burundi; 10,000 refugees flee into neighboring Tanzania.

* Secretary-General invites Iraq to discuss Security Council resolution permitting limited sale of oil in exchange for medicine and food.

* Governments fail to reach agreement on restriction of land-mines; will consider proposed compromise text before next round of discussions in April.

* International community lacks will or resources to intervene in support of a failed State; Secretary-General writes on Somalia in eighth volume of DPI's "blue books" series.

* Lebanon asks Security Council to extend UNIFIL mandate for another six months till 31 July.

* High death rate among young women in Paraguay from illegal abortions examined by Anti-Discrimination Committee; also studies report from Iceland.

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There is a great deal of concern among Security Council members on the situation in Burundi, according to its President, Sir John Weston (United Kingdom). Briefing correspondents today, he said that the Council had responded positively to the Secretary-General's 16 January letter, which outlined proposals made by the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadaka Ogato, following her recent visit to Burundi. The proposals included the urgent dispatch of a technical mission to examine existing security for humanitarian agencies and the need for closer cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) military observers who could liaise between Burundi's security forces and the agencies. Mrs. Ogata also recommended expanding application in Burundi of the Convention on the Safety and Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

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Ambassador Weston said the Council agreed the Secretary-General should put together a technical security assessment team. There were immediate humanitarian concerns in Burundi and Ms. Ogata had emphasized that if agencies were not able to carry out their work there could be a humanitarian tragedy. However, there were two other dimensions to the problem, namely the need for political dialogue and whether there should be other operational moves to pre-empt or prevent worse things from happening.

The Council would address those two questions following briefings from the Secretary-General and after hearing from former Tanzanian President Julius Nyrere who had been active in trying to reconnect a political dialogue in Burundi. Ambassador Weston said the Council would want to be very clear on objectives, resources and mandates before taking any new steps.

Meanwhile, about 10,000 Rwandan refugees fled into Tanzania last night, following shootings at the Mugano refugee camp in neighboring Burundi, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Federation, which is caring for 150,000 refugees in five camps in Burundi, says it will reassess the security of its staff and resources in the country, following the shooting incident.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has invited Iraq to enter into discussions on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 986 (1995), a United Nations spokesman said today. The resolution permits the sale of $2 million worth of Iraqi oil over six months in exchange for badly-needed food and medicine. A percentage of the oil revenues would replenish the United Nations Compensation Committee Fund in Geneva and help thousands of workers who suffered as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 January, Iraq's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Nizar Hamdoon, quotes his Deputy Prime Minister, Tareq Aziz, who says he would be prepared to enter into a dialogue with the Secretary-General provided that no conditions were placed upon Iraq.

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Governments today ended a week-long effort at the United Nations in Geneva to tighten restrictions on land-mines without reaching agreement, according to a United Nations Radio report. James Molander, the Chairman of the Review Conference of States parties to the Convention of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, told correspondents, that he had presented a compromise text, but there were still very strong rhetorical differences among the 50 States parties to the Convention.

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Mr. Molander said some delegates thought the compromise was too painful in humanitarian terms, too little, too vague and not sufficiently stringent. Others thought that it cost too much in military terms and that humanitarian needs had already been met. However, the compromise text, if applied, would save lives and would have a modest but immediate effect on national stockpiles in a number of countries, he said. The proposed compromise text will be assessed by Governments and negotiated before next April, when the Review Conference will resume discussions.

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At present, the international community does not seem to have the will or the resources to intervene effectively in support of a failed State, according to the Secretary-General. Writing in The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996, the eighth volume in the "blue book" series, published by the Department of Public Information, he says the United Nations succeeded in ending the country's war-induced famine. However, the Somalia operation showed the limitations of a combined peace-keeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian mission when the resolve to reconcile political differences is weak.

Despite the circumstances which prevented the operation from carrying out its mandate fully, it curbed the rampant violence and saved countless lives, the Secretary-General writes. However, the situation in Somalia will continue to deteriorate until the parties gain the political will to reach a peaceful solution to their dispute, or until the international community gives itself new instruments to address the phenomenon of a failed State. Above all, Somalia highlighted the urgent need for the international community to consider how it responded when all government systems collapsed and a country ceased functioning as a State.

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Lebanon has asked the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), for a another six months until 31 July. In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 17 January, Permanent Representative Samir Moubarak said that despite satisfactory economic performance and accelerated reconstruction, Israel's occupation of South Lebanon and its continued aggression was a major obstacle to comprehensive national recovery.

In view of the Israel's aggression, and the threat to the peace process, the implementation of resolution 425 (1978) was the only way to stop the violence in southern Lebanon, Ambassador Moubarak said. The Council could help secure peace in the region by demonstrating the inviolability of its resolutions and undertaking long overdue measures to implement resolution 425. He said UNIFIL's support and humanitarian assistance were vital to the civilian population, but were not a substitute for its original mandate under resolution 425, which was

to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli forces and assist the Lebanese Government in re-establishing its legitimate and effective authority in the south of the country.

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The high death rate of young women in Paraguay from illegal abortions was examined this week by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. It is estimated 23 out of every 100 deaths of young women in the country resulted from illegal abortions. Experts called for an assessment of the health impact of illegal abortion laws and requested more information on the number of prosecutions for abortion in Paraguay.

Experts from the 23-member expert Committee, which monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, expressed concern at the incidence of venereal disease among Paraguayan adolescent girls, and urged steps to combat AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Iceland reported that a law making its State Treasury responsible for damage to victims of domestic violence would take effect later this year. The Icelandic Ministry of Justice was studying whether victims of domestic violence ought to receive legal assistance.

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